

I HAVE COME IN MY FATHER'S NAME

John 5:31-47

Key verse 5:43

I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him.

First, "The very work I am doing testifies that the Father has sent me" (31-40). In chapter 5, we studied about Jesus healing an invalid for 38 years by telling him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk!" Jesus had pity on this man for his long suffering and made him well. But this man was not thankful for what Jesus had done for him. Instead, when his personal benefit was at stake, he betrayed Jesus by dumping all blame of breaking the Sabbath law on Jesus. As a result, Jesus was in trouble, being accused by the Jews as a lawbreaker. Why did Jesus work even on the Sabbath? Jesus told them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day. And I too, am working." At this, they tried all the harder to kill him, not only because he broke the Sabbath Laws, but also now because he called God his Father making himself equal with him. So, Jesus showed them how great he was: the very one God loved so much and thereby assigned him as the judge of all; he was the Son of God that if anyone heard his voice, that person would have eternal life, crossing over from death to life. That's Jesus' own testimony about himself. Jesus said to them in verse 31, "If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid." In the court, one's own testimony about himself is not valid. So Jesus came up with four testimony speakers who testified in his favor.

The first testimony speaker Jesus mentioned was John the Baptist. Look at verses 32 through 35. John was the forerunner of the Messiah, and the purpose of his coming was to reveal Jesus to the world so that they might believe in him. John testified about Jesus saying, "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." John baptized people with the water, but he told that Jesus was the one who would give them the baptism with fire and the Holy Spirit. John shouted about Jesus, saying, "I have seen and testify that this is the Son of God." (In 1:34) Jesus says in verse 35, "John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light."

The second testimony speaker was the very work Jesus was doing. Look at verse 36. Let's read this verse together:

"I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me."

A well known servant of God like John the Baptist testifying about Jesus was really effective. But Jesus had testimony weightier than that of John the

Baptist. What was it? It was the very work Jesus was doing in his day to day life. The way he lived his life, what he did and what he pursued showed who he was. When you see a person who goes out in uniform, patrols all day long, and issues speeding tickets, you can tell that he is a police officer. When you see a person who works at the hospital, issuing prescriptions and performing surgery, you can tell that he is a doctor. By seeing how people spend their time, what they do, what they pursue in their life, you can tell what kind of people they are - firefighters, nurses, CPAs, businessmen,... In the same way, by seeing how Jesus lived, what he did and what he pursued in his day to day life, we can tell who he was - a servant of God, sent by God to do his work. Some people promote sinful environment by their sinful behaviors, and we can tell that surely they are not from God. Some people just work hard to make their lives successful, or to enjoy fun and pleasures this world offers. They enjoy long vacation, and travel all known exciting sight-seeing attractions such as Cancun, the Bahamas, and we can tell that they are not sent by God.

But how did Jesus live his life? What did he do? What did he pursue in his life? Did he pour out his time, energy and talent for a successful life to eat better and to live in a bigger house? Did he work hard to enjoy all kinds of luxuries and convenience in the world? No! If he were there on his own, he too would do things for himself just like other people did, using his time and energy for his own pleasures. But he did not do so. Instead, using every flying minute, he taught people the word of God, struggling hard to help them repent and turn to God - that's how he spent his time on earth, and he even died for this purpose. Why? It was because he was sent by God to do what God wanted. He was living according to the will of God. The way he lived, the work he was doing testified that he was not on his own, but sent by God. That was testimony weightier than that of John the Baptist. Many people say that they are children of God. But what they do speaks more loudly who they truly are than their own words. The kind of work they do testifies who they truly are.

What is God's seal of approval upon us that we are sent by Him? If a well known servant of God like Billy Graham testifies about us publicly in the TV interview that all the shepherds and shepherdesses at Shepherds Church are real disciples of Jesus, it will be really cool - we are officially recognized as servants of God. But we have testimony weightier than that of Billy Graham. What is it? The very work we are doing in our day to day life! It is the way we live our life here on earth. Check out how we live our life - always struggling with the word of God, spending many hours in studying and teaching the word of God, and then, struggling to write deep testimonies for hours, some people doing daily bread every day; despite continuous rejection and hot California sun, we keep struggling to find sheep day in and day out; we teach them the word of God, helping them repent and turn to God, to choose God over money, pleasures or success; we carry them in our hearts, and our whole concern is how to help them receive God's words and turn to God decisively. Indeed, this is how we spend our day to day life, and this is how we will spend our entire

life. What kind of people are we? Certainly, the way we live our life, the work we are doing testifies that we are servants of God, sent by God to do his work. The very work we are doing testifies who we are. Paul says in Romans 10:15, "And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" If you bring good news, in God's eyes, even your feet are beautiful! This is testimony weightier than that of Billy Graham that proves that we are sent by God.

The third testimony speaker was God the Father. Look at verses 37 and 38. Let's read these verses together:

37 And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, 38 nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent.

At the beginning of Jesus' messianic ministry, when he received the baptism from John the Baptist, the heaven opened, and the Holy Spirit came down on him in the form of dove, and God the Father told him, "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." (Mk 1:11) Later, on the transfiguration mountain, God testified about Jesus in the same way.

Jesus says, "You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent." Here Jesus pointed out what great blessings they forfeited only because they did not believe the one God sent - they failed to hear God's voice; they failed to see his form, and his word did not dwell in them. They were God-believing people. It is all God-believing people's dream to hear his voice, see his form and his word dwelling in them. Hearing his voice shows that their relationship with God is bi-directional, mutual, not that they just do all kinds of religious things in worship of God, but also, God responds by speaking to them; it means that not only they struggle to worship God and love God, but also God knows them, recognizes their struggles and services, and He intervenes. When their relationship with God is like this, their worship of God is not just conceptual or religious, but very personal, real and practical, and there is such deep confidence and joy in worshiping and serving God.

Humans cannot see God's form. When any human sees God's form, his glory is so overwhelming that simply human body cannot bear it, and thereby, that person dies. Of course, that's not what Jesus is talking about. Instead, here seeing God's form shows their personal contact with God - their divine, miraculous, or even mysterious experiences with God; it's so amazingly great that once anyone has that kind of divine experience of God, their eyes are opened to the reality of God, then, in view of God's presence in their life, they see everything differently; thus, their life changes. Many Christians have a kind of Kamikaze suicide squad faith - they say that no matter what, they believe. But that kind of human determination is so weak; at the challenges of life,

such faith is often being dashed to pieces. Also, some Christians have a very fatalistic view of their Christian life. Simply, their Christian life is so hard, painful and miserable, but since their eyes are opened to the truth that God exists, heaven is real and hell is real, they have no other choice but live as Christians continually - painful Christian life. Their Christian life is like wounded wolves, growling, vicious and ready to attack because they have already too many wounds and scars that they cannot allow even one more. All these Christians are greatly mistaken. They are still blind. Christian life is not so painful and miserable like that; it is not doing Christian things endlessly. Instead, it is the life of seeing God's form, experiencing God in such a divine and amazing way. When you love God and seek God really, at the right time, God reveals Himself to you - usually, when you reach your limit, or when everything in your life is at stake, or when you lose everything in the world - how come only or usually in such conditions? I don't know why. But it seems that, when we are in that kind of condition, when we reach our limit, there we become really real and sincere, and thereby, a channel through which God can reveal Himself to us is formed. Then, once you have such a divine encounter with God, you see that you are not struggling alone, but together with God. Then, your Christian life is not torturous, or it is not just your own mind play, saying, "I think I believe. I think I believe." When you see God's form that way, you have real treasure in your mortal body that you become strong and your Christian life is wonderful. Then, you are no longer ordinary human, but someone very special, who know the Creator God. Such people are strong.

God's word dwelling in us shows God's word exercising its influence in us, shaping up our perspectives and life according to God's desire. Maybe, this is the most important struggle all God-believing people have; or it is a very important goal of all Christian struggles. Abraham lived in Canaan according to God's word - that's God's will for him. But when life's challenge came, when financial difficulties rose, he left Canaan and went down to Egypt for survival. At that time, he was not planted in the Promised Land, because God's word was not planted in him. Then, after experiencing God's help and blessing in regard to his wife Sarai and money matter in Egypt, he understood God's will and returned to Canaan; he traveled all the way to the original place where he had first built an altar to the Lord, and there, he started his life of faith all over again, with a new heart's complete determination that he would never ever leave the promised land. He was indeed planted in the promised land - now God word dwelled in him. God-believing life is not about doing all kinds of good looking things or doing all kinds of Christian things endlessly. Instead, it is about God's word dwelling in us. Jesus says, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then, you will know the truth and the truth will set you free." (Jn 8:31-32)

Jesus said to the Jews, "You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, 38 nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent." All these blessings could have been given to them, only if they believed

the one God sent as God's servant for them. But by rejecting the one God sent as God's messenger for them, they forfeited all these blessings. So, without hearing God's voice, without seeing God's form, and without God's words dwelling in them, they just did all kinds of religious things, becoming proud of their righteous life and Bible knowledge, despising others who were not like them. Outwardly, they looked devout, but actually, they were becoming enemies of God - Satan's instruments.

Today, still God sends many of his servants to people. Only if people believe those who are sent by God as God's messengers, they will open their eyes, see God's glory and have salvation in Christ. If they accept the one as God's messenger personally sent to them, they can see clearly that God is concerned about them, and cares for them; they can see that God has watched over them, and paid attention to their cause; there, they realize that they are not alone, but God has been with them all the time; they can see that God loves them and wants to lead them, even by sending his messenger personally to them; there, they are happy and joyful with God; they are thankful to God for his grace and love for them. Only if they believe the one sent by God as God's messenger for them, their eyes are truly opened to God's love for them, and they enter into real fellowship with God. Today, God brings amazing blessings to us by sending his servants to us. Those who accept them as God's messengers personally sent to them, enjoy all these blessings - seeing God and hearing his voice and, God's word dwells in them.

The fourth testimony speaker is the Scriptures. Look at verses 39 and 40. Let's read these verses together:

39You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me,
40yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

The Jews were zealous about the Scriptures. They studied the Scriptures all the days of their lives. Why? Because their understanding was that, by the Scriptures, they would possess eternal life. Wow!! They had really a wonderful perspective, far better than that of many Christians who never really study the Bible. As a result, they had good understanding of what the Bible was talking about. They knew that the Messiah was coming, and they even knew that the Messiah would come from Bethlehem as the Son of David. But it was ironic that these Bible believing and Bible studying Jews rejected Jesus of whom the Bible actually testified. They failed as God-believing people. Their failure shows that accepting Jesus is not the matter of understanding or knowledge, but of heart.

Second, "I have come in my Father's name" (41-47). The Jews failed as God-believers. Why did they fail, even after having such a good perspective about the Bible and eternal life, and even after making such sincere efforts to

study the Bible diligently throughout their entire life? Now in verses 41 through 47, Jesus shows the reasons. Look at verses 41 and 42. Jesus said to them, "I do not accept praise from men, 42but I know you. I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts." The first reason was that they did not have the love of God in their hearts. They were the Jews who had the Bible and worship service. The Jews despised the Gentiles calling them dogs and pigs. They thought that they were the very ones who loved God and honored God. They said, "If not we, then, who loves God?" But Jesus told them, "I know that you do not have the love of God in your heart." The Jews did not accept Jesus whom God sent not because they did not know who he was, but because they did not love God; instead, they loved something else such as wealth, or their own reputation in the society. This then, explains why some people, even after enjoying Bible studies for a while, reject us as God's servants or refuse to commit themselves to God - simply, they do not have the love of God in their hearts; instead, they love something else; they even refuse God's will upon their life so that they can pursue or secure what they really love.

"I know you. I know that you do not have the love of God in your heart." What shocking statements these are. Our God sees everything hidden; our Bible knowledge, religious activities or even our perfect record of worship service attendance cannot hide from God who we truly are, or what we truly love; all men stand before him naked, and all their shameful and secret deeds, thoughts and desires are exposed to him naked. When we think about this statement of Jesus, we are alarmed, and come to have the fear of God. What would Jesus say to us? Would he say to you, 'I know that you love me'? How horrible it would be if Jesus says to you or to me, "I know that you do not have the love of God in your heart." We must ask this question to ourselves with a fearful and trembling heart, "Do I truly love God or something else? What would Jesus say about me?" Those who do not have the love of God in their hearts do not accept the one God sent; instead, they make excuses and say, "I go to other church."

Look at verse 43. Let's read this verse together:

43I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him.

Here, Jesus explains another reason why the Jews did not accept him as the one sent by God. It was because he came to them in God's name. What does it mean that people rejected Jesus because he came in God's name? What does it mean that if someone else comes in his own name, people will accept him? The one who comes in his own name comes to people for his own purpose. A politician running for election come to people with many good words, promising them good things. He does so to gain their votes and thereby, be reelected. His purpose is not to be rejected, but accepted, honored and praised. So this man does not say anything offensive to others so as to gain their hearts.

When someone else comes to God's people in his own name, he does not say words that can offend them. Instead, he uses words that are acceptable and pleasing to them. Even when people are doing what is sinful, and even if God's wrath is coming for their sins, he speaks to them the words that are pleasing to their ears, such as, "God bless you," or "God is with you." Such a person is a false prophet.

But Jesus did not come in his own name for his own purpose, but in God's name to serve God's purpose. He was there not to gain people's heart for himself, but to serve God's will. They were God's people, believing in the Bible, keeping the worship service absolutely, and doing all kinds of God-worship things. Yet, in God's eyes, they were not doing right; that's why he sent his servant to help them see things right, and turn to God and do what God wanted them to do. So when Jesus came, he challenged them to repent, disapproving what they had been doing, not giving them any credit, rebuking them of their sinful lives. Instead of saying, "Peace be with you," he rebuked them harshly, saying, "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs ... on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness." When people heard this, they were offended, so they hated him. The prophets in the Old Testament also came to people in the name of God. God sent them to warn them of the coming wrath and to help them turn to God in repentance. So when they came, they did not try to purchase people's hearts for themselves, but they tried hard to serve the will of God. They rebuked people of their sins and challenged them to repent and turn to God. People who were loaded with sinful desires felt so bad and offended that they persecuted these prophets and even killed many of them. Those who come to people in God's name will be rejected, but those who come in their own name will be loved and praised. We too must make our choice very clear - whether we come in our own name or in God's name. If we come in our own name, we have no reason to go against the flow or challenge others to repent of their sins; instead, we will bless them saying, "God loves you. God loves all kinds of people; God understands your weaknesses. God bless you." But if we come in God's name, we disapprove the lifestyle of people and challenge them to repent of their sinful way of life, and turn to God. People may not recognize us as God's servants. But it's totally okay. What's the meaning of the approval from those sinful people? Nothing. We just want to serve God's will no matter what, because we want to please Him alone who sent us.

Look at verse 44. "How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God?" When they were so concerned about what others would think of them and had a desire to be praised and recognized as devout men of God by others, there was no room for them to pursue the praise that came from God. What they loved and pursued was praise from men as devout men of God. For this, they made great effort - praying in the market place, getting certificates to show

others how great and devout they were, and obtaining good titles and positions in the religious society. At that time, indeed, there was no love of God in their hearts. Let's live before God alone! Let's have the love of God in our hearts. We don't need any man's approval, but the approval that comes from God.

As a conclusion, Jesus said to them, "If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?" It is really shocking that this was how Jesus saw them. In his eyes, they did not believe what Moses wrote - the five books of Moses from Genesis to Deuteronomy, which they held as the Canon, the most authentic parts of the Scriptures. They were the ones who would despise all evolutionists saying that God's creation is really real. They ever thought that they believed the Bible. But Jesus said that they did not. We must not be like people who casually say that they believe everything that is written in the Bible. Instead, we must be real before God, making sincere efforts to accept God's words and live by them. Let's pray that God's words may dwell in us firmly.

In this passage, we learned why the Jews rejected Jesus. It was not because of any other reason but because they did not have the love of God in their hearts; despite their clean, moralistic life, despite their great knowledge of the Bible, they did not have the love of God in their hearts; instead, they loved something else such as praise from men or wealth. When their hearts were filled with the desire for something else than God, they had no interest in God's will. So, they rejected Jesus who came to them in God's name. We must check out what is there in our hearts - the love of God, or the love of something else. We must not be deceived by our zealous Christian life either - that's the trap all the Jews fell in. Instead, we must love God alone, and nothing else. Whoever loves anything in the world, the love of God is not in him. May God bless us that we may love God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our strength.

One Word: I Have Come In My Father's Name